

SUBJECTS.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

61. The need for a Demonstration Farm for the Kottayam taluk.

Mr. P. M. Chacko, E. A. (Member, Kottayam taluk) said that there was an experimental farm at Kottayam thirty years ago, conducted by an association; but it ceased to exist after working for a few years. The people of the taluk were really conservative and would not move unless they were made to move. The methods and implements of agriculture used by the ryots were so very antiquated that they were quite unsuited to modern requirements. The cost of cultivation had increased to a considerable extent and cultivators could rarely find a margin of profit. He therefore requested that the Government might be pleased to establish a demonstration farm at Kottayam and thus instruct the people in ploughing, sowing, planting, manuring, the rotation of crops, the selection of seeds and, above all, in the use of a simple labour-saving machine for draining water from the *punja* lands.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

62. The desirability of establishing grazing grounds and manure depots in the Eraniel taluk.

Mr. P. Krishna Pillai (Member, Eraniel taluk) said that, with the extension of wet cultivation and the increased requirements for the conveniences of the people, such as buildings, roads, canals etc., the lands available for the grazing of cattle were considerably reduced and cattle had now to be fed at an enormous cost. The number of cattle was therefore steadily decreasing and it had gone down so low that hardly one head of cattle was available for one acre of cultivated land on an average. With the decrease in the number of cattle and the destruction of the trees supplying leaf-manure, the people were undergoing much difficulty in finding their supply of manure also. He therefore requested that at least two grazing grounds be reserved in the *pakuthies* of Colachel and Manavalakurichi and one or two manure depots also be opened in suitable places in the same *pakuthies*. For the grazing ground in the Manavalakurichi *pakuthi*, the Member suggested the Periyakulam tank-bed.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

63. The necessity for reserving grazing grounds and for supplying a manure depot in South Travancore.

Mr. D. C. Joseph (Member, Nominated) said that he fully supported the representation on the subject made by the Members who spoke before him. The subject was one which had been discussed at the previous sessions of the Assembly also. But he regretted to observe that nothing tangible and definite had so far been done to mitigate the suffering of the ryots in the matter of grazing grounds. He observed that the money spent in providing grazing grounds was not money sunk in an unprofitable concern. Apart from the help thereby rendered to the ryots, the Government could realize from all such lands a good rate of interest on the money laid out, by auctioning the right of collecting manure from such grounds. He therefore requested the Government to bestow some attention on that important matter. He also requested that a manure depot be opened in South Travancore and the best manure possible supplied to the ryots at cost price. Unless improved kinds of manure were brought within easy reach of the ryots and their advantage understood by the free use of them, it was unlikely that the superior or artificial manure would become popularised, and the ancient and

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primitive methods of cultivation changed in the near future. The establishment of a manure depot was a step calculated to help the realisation of the above object. He added that at present artificial manure was not available at all times in sufficient quantities, not to speak of the very high prices which had to be paid for it.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

V.—Public Works.

84. Some suggestions to check the wasteful expenditure of the Public Works Department.

Mr. Krishnan Madhavan (Member, Karunagappalli taluk) observed that the expenditure under 'salaries and establishment charges' in the Public Works Department had considerably risen since the reorganisation of the department, *viz.*, from 16 per cent to 19 per cent of the total expenditure, and that it bore no comparison with that in the neighbouring State of Cochin where the percentage was only 13. In his opinion, the following reduction in the staff of the department was possible and should be made.

(1) There was no necessity for a Deputy Chief Engineer on a monthly salary of Rs. 900, as his work could be conveniently attended to by the Executive Engineer in charge of the Trivandrum Division.

(2) For 6 Divisions, there were at present 8 Executive Engineers. Even reserving one for possible contingencies, such as leave, it should be quite possible to reduce the number to 7. As one officer in the grade was now on leave preparatory to retirement, he suggested that the vacancy might be absorbed when it occurred.

(3) A staff of 15 Assistant Engineers and 3 Sub-Engineers was far too much for 11 Sub-Divisions. On being told by the Dewan that there were really 16 Sub-Divisions, the Member said that the excess number after allowing one Assistant Engineer for each Sub-Division might be reduced. He added that, if it be ruled that at least the qualified among the Supervisors, who now numbered 10, could hold charge of Sub-Divisions, a further reduction in the number of Assistant Engineers would be possible.

(4) 10 Supervisors and 44 Overseers to hold charge of Sections was inordinately high. Even restricting the charge of Sections to Supervisors or Overseers, as was now insisted on, the number of Overseers could be brought down to what it was before the reorganisation, *viz.*, 33.

The Member thought that the analogy of British India in fixing the staff could not hold good, as there the jurisdiction of the officers was wider and the number of concentrated works much more than here. Examining the budget of expenditure of the department for 1088, he said that the really important works, *viz.*, construction of buildings, were only to the extent of 6 lakhs of rupees and, to spend that amount, a costly staff such as existed at present was unnecessary.